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EDWARDSON ASSOCIATES

Planning & Diversification Consultants

Mrs Hilary Saunders
North York Moors National Park Authority
The Old Vicarage
Bondgate
Helmsley
York
YO62 5BP



28 March 2014

Dear Mrs Saunders,

Proposal: Use of part of the approved caravan and camping park for the siting of camping pods at Northcliffe Holiday Park, Bottoms Lane, High Hawkser, Whitby, YO22 4LL

Planning and Design and Access Statement

Please find the attached planning application in respect of the above. I would be grateful if you could regard this letter as comprising a Planning and Design and Access Statement to be forwarded to consultees as you consider appropriate.

Summary

This application seeks full planning permission to site timber camping pods on an area of land within an existing caravan and camping park already approved for tenting.

Informal pre submission liaison has been carried out with The Team Leader, Hilary Saunders.

The proposals represent a small scale and sustainable diversification of the existing well established and well run tourism business within the National Park. Essentially this proposal aims to improve the quality of an existing tourism product.

The proposal abuts other facilities on the park, is well screened and will improve the landscape quality, appearance and biodiversity of the park through the introduction of additional landscape planting.

It is considered that this small scale proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan, responding positively to the National Planning Policy Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development. There will be no adverse effects on the special

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character and quality of the landscape and environment of the National Park or on the amenities of the local community. The proposals will help an existing business to remain vibrant and viable and thus will have a positive contribution to the economy and continued attraction of the National Park to visitors, without undermining its special qualities and tranquillity.

Background

Northcliffe and Seaview Holiday Parks have an 11 month open season and caravans can remain stored on their pitches for the closed period over much of the site.

The applicants wish to retain the potential to meet the demand for the better quality accommodation that is provided by static caravans, particularly from existing users of the Park who wish to upgrade from their seasonal static caravans, but the prevailing financial climate has meant that this is unlikely to be progressed for the time being.

However, the demand for the more affordable type of holiday provided for by pods is proving popular in the economic downturn. This has meant refocusing the medium term business plan to try and meet the growing demand for an "outdoor camping" experience in pods.

Pods provide a higher quality camping experience than tents – particularly during wet and cold weather seasons. Pods provide accommodation that is ready to use immediately and it is becoming a popular alternative to tents.

Camping pods also provide a viable business trade during the winter months and is a step towards higher quality tourist accommodation.

Design Component

The proposal will not increase the overall number of holiday pitches on the Park. This area of the site is already used for a mixture of tenting and touring caravans therefore some existing pitches will inevitably be lost in providing the pods.

The proposal will not increase overall levels of activity associated with the Park. The natural earthy colours and timber construction of the pods will have less impact on the appearance of the area than the predominantly white of touring caravans with coloured awnings and often large, coloured tents and so will ensure that the development is more visually recessive in the wider landscape.

The pods will connect to the existing mains electricity supply. Foul water will drain to existing site services and treatment plant.

The camping pods are approximately 6.2 metres long by 3.5 metres wide with the apex approximately 3.0 metres high.

The pods are designed to be fully serviced. A toilet, sink and shower are incorporated, enabling the provision of top quality serviced tourism accommodation.

Appraisal of Context

There is a National Planning Policy Framework general presumption in favour of small scale, sustainable rural diversification schemes. This presumption cascades down into the policies of the National Park's Local Development Framework. This proposal is intended to help meet current demand for the growing market in camping "pods".

The relevant North York Moors Local Development Policy is Development Policy 14.

Core Strategy policy DP14 states that the expansion or diversification of an existing business like this will be supported. This proposal is considered to accord with the criteria of policy DP14 as follows:

1. The proposal will enhance the enjoyment of visitors to the National Park in a way that does not undermine its special qualities.
2. The development has satisfactory access to the road network.
3. The activity levels are acceptable.

Development Policy 16 relates to new or expansions of camping and chalet sites.

The replacement of tents and tourers with pods is not regarded as an expansion of the site to which policy DP16 would apply. This proposal is considered to be within the spirit of DP16 in that the development, due to the landscaping and proposed improvements, will not harm the special qualities of the National Park; no additional residential accommodation is required in connection with the proposal; the site is close to the road network and will not increase traffic generation; the scale and type of the development will not adversely affect the special qualities of the National Park and the pods can be readily removed if no longer required.

The context, appearance and extent of the existing caravan park means that the impact of camping pods will be minimal.

The location of the site away from any neighbouring properties is such that no adverse effects on residential amenity are anticipated.

There is existing screening to the West and South of the area and further landscaping is proposed including hedging and tree planting to the East to provide further screening. This will help to soften the impact of the development and foster biodiversity enhancements for the park generally.

The Access Component

The existing access to the Park will continue to be used. The requirements of the site licence will ensure that the site can be readily accessed by emergency vehicles if required. It is not anticipated that the pods will have any adverse effect on traffic and activity levels.

Conclusion

The proposed development will provide an improvement in the facilities provided by the existing and well established and well managed caravan and camping site. The proposed pods are timber clad and will not have a detrimental impact on the immediate or wider landscape.

The proposal will also better meet the demands and expectations of visitors in the area thereby bringing important benefits to the wider economy, with particular regard to visitors "spend" in local shops, restaurants, public houses.

The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Development Policy 16 in the Local Development Framework and the NPPF. The "Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism" spells out the key contribution for tourism both to the local economy and in social/ job creation terms. It specifically encourages Local Authorities to take a positive approach to tourism proposals.

In addition, it is considered that this small scale, sustainable proposals responds positively to the broad vision for the National Park, which aims to balance enjoyment, awareness, understanding and respect for the National Park against the concurrent objectives of supporting appropriate business growth and diversification and protection and enhancement of the natural landscape, environment and host communities of the National Park.

It is hoped that officers will be able to support this application and recommend it for approval. Should any additional information be required please do not hesitate to contact Roy Edwardson of this office or myself.

Yours faithfully



Melanie Edwardson MRICS MSc Urban Devt + Plng BSc (Hons) Land Man
Director